

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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## Coming home

FR BERNÁRD LYNCH'S book *A Priest on Trial*, published 30 years ago, ends with an open letter to Pope John Paul II in which he prays for a radical pontifical *kenosis* – relinquishing empty honorifics such as “vicar of Christ”, cleaning up the Church’s financial investments, ordaining women to priestly ministry and (not least) the recognition of the intrinsic goodness of gay and lesbian persons. *The Tablet’s* reviewer wryly remarked: “Lynch’s plea may transcend the limits of the imaginable, but it aptly epitomises the wild, dare I say, prophetic cheek of a man still deeply in love with the Christ who suffers in the poor, sick and oppressed.”

The Church of Bernárd Lynch’s audacious imagination may be coming closer.

He was on the roster of speakers at the Spirit Unbounded conference, the off-Broadway production running in parallel to the more staid Synod on Synodality in the Vatican’s Paul VI Hall. Its stages – both virtual and face to face, in Bristol and Rome – were filled by musicians and artists as well as speakers such as Mary McAleese, Cherie Blair and Joan Chittister. A recording of the talk Lynch gave at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London



last autumn was featured on the opening day. The theme was the abuse crisis. “It is our duty to break the silence ... Being holy in our daily lives means protecting the abused and fighting for them,” he said.

BORN IN ENNIS, County Clare, Lynch spent two years working as a young priest in Zambia before pursuing a doctorate in New York while serving as chaplain to a boys’ high school. Here, his work with people with Aids began. Many of them were Irish, often abandoned by their own families and rejected by the Church. His support for gay rights

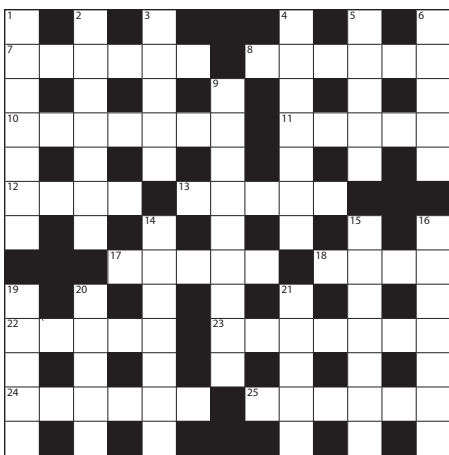
brought down on him a false prosecution perpetrated by church and government officials. In 1989 he was declared “fiercely innocent” by Justice Burton Roberts in the Bronx Supreme Court. In 2017, Lynch was honoured by New York City Council for more than 40 years of service to the LGBT and Aids communities in the city.

In June, at a civic reception in his honour in Ennis, surrounded by family, friends, his partner Billy Desmond and the people of the town, Lynch delivered a powerful speech touching on acceptance, injustice, honour and gratitude. “This is not simply about me,” he said, “it is about all women and men, the great diaspora who had to leave this beautiful land of ours because we did not fit in, we were sexual outlaws, forced out not for education or employment like thousands of my generation, but simply for being born gay or LGBT as God made us.”

The reception followed the broadcast of *Falsely Accused*, a widely acclaimed radio documentary on Clare FM produced by Padraic Flaherty and now available as a podcast on the usual platforms. Fr Lynch, still full of vim and hopefulness, told us: “It shows that sometimes our beloved Church will spare no price and count no cost in its denial of love and justice to the outcast.”

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 876 Enigma



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 21 October, *The Tablet*, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: [thetablet@thetablet.co.uk](mailto:thetablet@thetablet.co.uk), with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on Jesus, Christian Art and Catholicism – from OUP’s Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random.

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### Across

- 7 Cicero (106–43 BC) was a great ----- (6)
- 8 Home of the late poet, George Mackay Brown (6)
- 10 A fruit with several separate carpels is defined as this (7)
- 11 *Soylent* -----; 1973 dystopian thriller film (5)
- 12 1954 science fiction film about giant ants (4)
- 13 The -----; popular name of decompression sickness in divers (5)
- 17 This water bird is unable to walk on dry land (5)
- 18 Shakespeare’s “poor, infirm, weak and despised old man” (4)
- 22 Fish celebrated in Schubert’s Piano Quintet in A major (5)

- 23 Home of Jane Austen’s Lady Catherine de Bourgh (7)
- 24 Common name of flowers regionally known as bluebonnets (6)
- 25 ----- Highness ranks below Royal Highness (6)

### Down

- 1 Mother, later wife, of Oedipus (7)
- 2 Member of the lowest hereditary titled British order (7)
- 3 The Pentateuch is known by this name to those of the Jewish faith (5)
- 4 *Slapstick* -----; 1966 award-winning Broadway play by Tennessee Williams (7)
- 5 World’s longest mountain range (5)

- 6 John -----; Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1727–43 (5)
- 9 Call sign of British Airways (9)
- 14 Subatomic particles with a positive electric charge (7)
- 15 ----- of Abydos and Hero; tragic lovers in Greek mythology (7)
- 16 Copper zinc alloys (7)
- 19 Term used for a ring-shaped island, with a coral rim, circling a lagoon (5)
- 20 A small, plasticine man featured in Tony Hart’s TV series (5)
- 21 Type of small willow tree (5)

### SUDOKU | Hard

		1		9				3
		9	1		4			
3					8			6
		5						3
4	6						5	9
	3						1	
	9		2					8
			7		1	4		
8				6		2		

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

### Solution to the 30 September puzzle

1	4	7	3	5	9	2	6	8
2	8	5	7	1	6	9	3	4
9	3	6	8	2	4	7	1	5
4	5	2	9	3	8	1	7	6
6	7	1	5	4	2	8	9	3
3	9	8	6	7	1	5	4	2
5	6	4	1	8	7	3	2	9
7	2	3	4	9	5	6	8	1
8	1	9	2	6	3	4	5	7

### Solution to the 30 September crossword No. 873

- Across: 6 Rasa; 7 Shoulder; 8 Abominations; 9 Benedictines; 11 Oberammergau; 16 Transylvania; 18 Honduras; 19 Oboe.  
Down: 1 Baobab; 2 Palm; 3 Coptic; 4 Flooring; 5 Lessee; 7 Synod; 10 Normandy; 12 Bathos; 13 Misery; 14 Ellis; 15 Unison; 17 Amos.